

KnowBrainer Review of [NaturallySpeaking Ver. 13](#)

(available from Nuance Certified Resellers,
including [KnowBrainer Inc.](#))

(Published on 7-24-14)

(Edited on 03-12-15)

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The following review covers the Ver. 13 Editions of DNS Home, Premium, Pro, and Legal. This review will be subject to revisions/updates as we continue working with the application, or in the event that Nuance releases a service release patch. Whenever we edit this review, we will note it at the top of the page.

Note: DMPE 3 (Dragon Medical 13) is not likely to be released until mid-2015. At that time, we will create a separate review.

Introduction:

Dragon NaturallySpeaking Ver. 13 includes over 100 new features and enhancements, among which are: improved accuracy, Hotmail/Gmail enhancements, Firefox and Google Chrome support (via a new RIA II plug-in), support for WordPerfect X7 and open Office 4.1. Dragon Ver. 13 also features improvements to the built-in tutorials, Vocabulary Editor, text-to-speech engine, and Smart Formatting rules. BestMatch V speed has been improved and there is a new sound source management system.

Our Top 10 Reasons for Purchasing Dragon 13:

1. BestMatch V was introduced in DNS Ver. 12 but suffered from latency issues. This caused dictation to take up to 6 seconds to land in your document. BestMatch V has been fixed in DNS Ver. 13. It is our opinion that this, alone, is sufficient reason for upgrading.
2. Support for Google Chrome and Firefox web browsers is now nearly identical to that provided for Internet Explorer.
3. Support is provided for WordPerfect X7 and OpenOffice Writer 4.1.
4. Training a user profile is no longer necessary, or even recommended. Simply run a new, shorter version of the Audio Check and you're done.
5. A new Manage Dictation Sources feature allows you to easily manage multiple sound systems in one place; even multiple USB sound systems.
6. The Vocabulary Editor has undergone major improvements.
7. The DragonBar, now smaller, collapses (out of the way).
8. The new Far Field Algorithms should increase the accuracy of any TableMike, while doubling its pickup range.
9. Smarter formatting rules mean more intelligent anticipation of your needs.
10. DNS Ver. 13 runs faster than DNS Ver. 12, even on slower processors.

The following is a list of Dragon 13 Pros and Cons

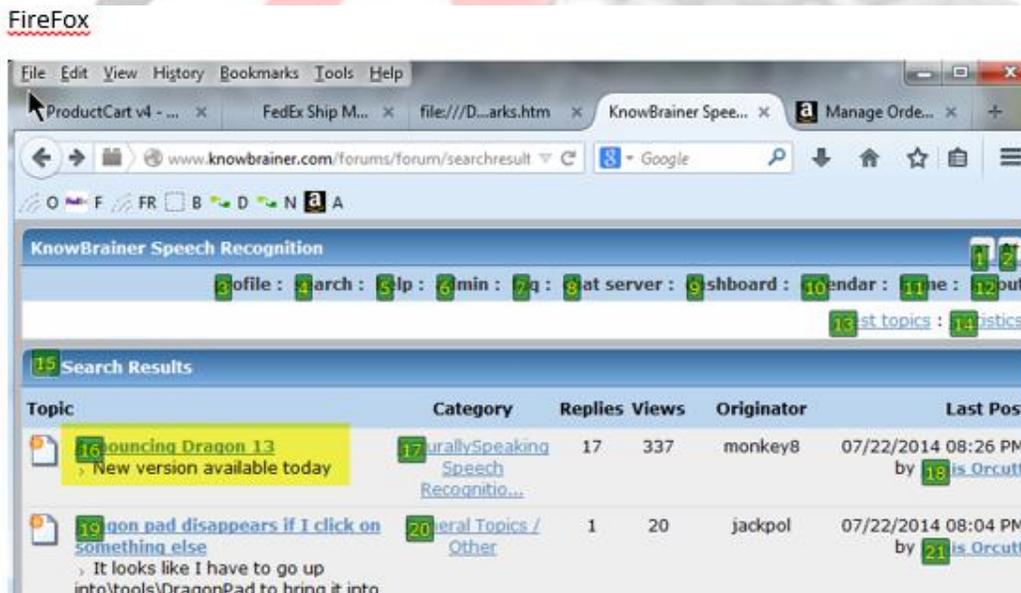
Pros:

- DNS Ver. 1-10 utilized BestMatch III (trigram algorithms). DNS Ver. 11 introduced BestMatch IV (quad gram algorithms) and dual core processing. DNS Ver. 12 introduced BestMatch V but, in our opinion, BestMatch V wasn't quite finished. Although BestMatch V was highly accurate, it was also sluggish and could take up to 2 seconds to drop dictation into a document. To make matters worse, if you had a large collection of personal commands or utilized a third-party command utility, dictation latency could run longer than 6 seconds. We considered this delay to be unacceptable, so advised our DNS Ver. 12 customers to back down to BestMatch IV. We can now recommend BestMatch V to all end-users who are working with reasonably fast computers (i5 quad core or higher CPU, 2.6 GHz with 8 Gb of RAM).

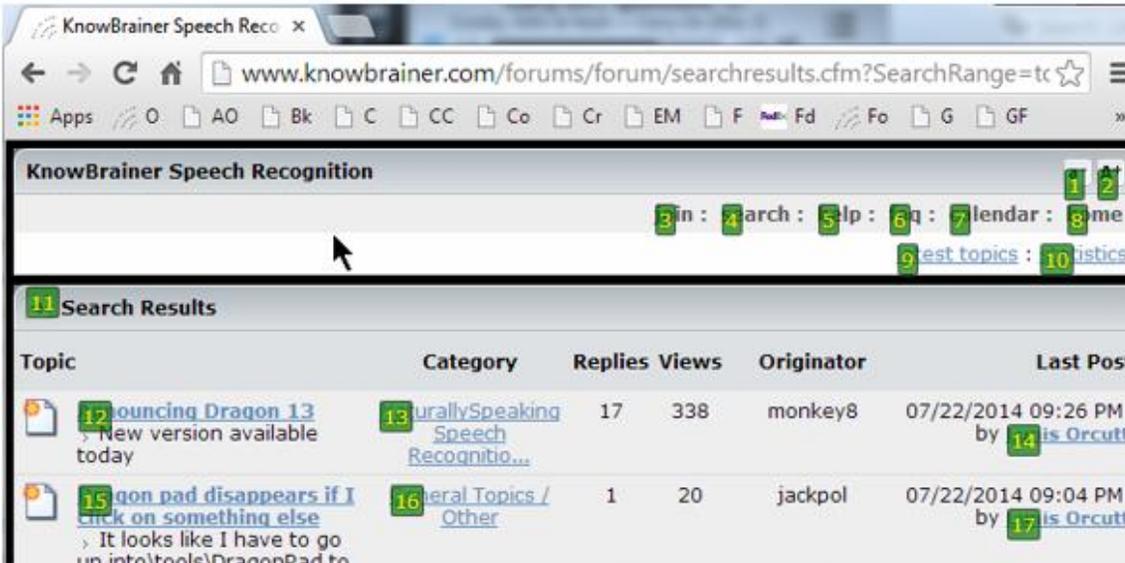
Definition of BestMatch Algorithms: Utilizing BestMatch III, you can dictate up to 5 words in a single phrase and Dragon will compare the middle word to the 1st 2 and last 2 words. This is how Dragon differentiates between "to", "two" or "too", in a phrase. BestMatch IV increases the algorithm count to 7 words and BestMatch V increases the algorithm count to 9 words. If you dictate 9 or more words, BestMatch V comes into play. The more words Dragon has to compare, the higher its accuracy potential becomes.

- Dictation speed (how long it takes your dictation to appear as words in a document) appears faster than in previous versions of Dragon.
- While we were unable to verify Nuance's 15% higher accuracy claim (translating to 15% fewer errors), we definitely were able to verify modest accuracy gains. Any significant error reduction saves valuable (correction) time, reducing user frustration.
- DNS Ver. 13 provides enhanced Gmail and Hotmail support.

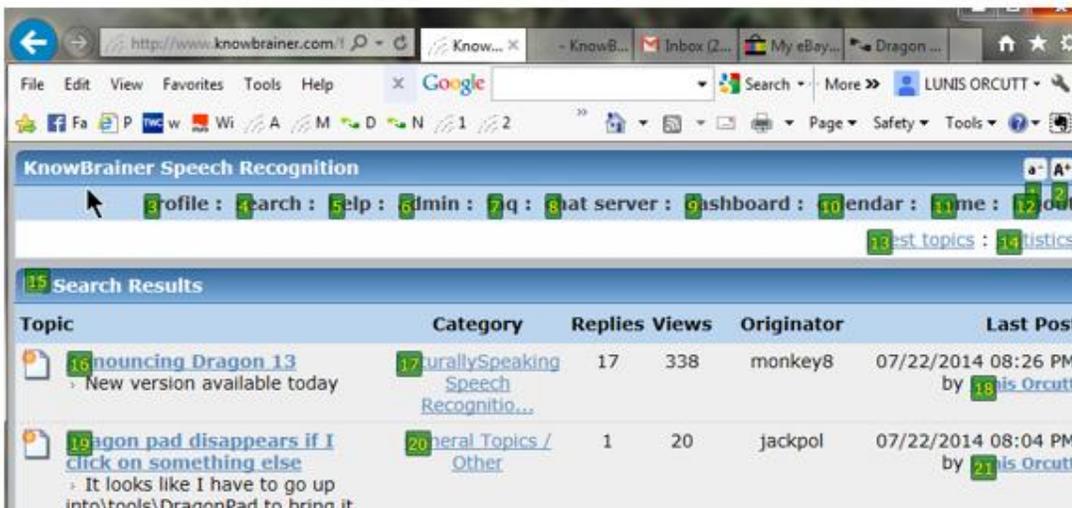
• **RIA II** (Rich Text second-generation support) plug-in is for Google Chrome and Firefox web browsers. Nuance introduced the RIA I support in DNS Ver. 12, but all it added was marginal support for Hotmail and Gmail. The DNS Ver. 12 implementation of RIA was so poorly executed in Google Chrome that it typically caused Google Chrome to crash. Only Internet Explorer included full Active Accessibility and Full Text Control. DNS Ver. 13 adds substantial support for Google Chrome and Firefox. For example, if you say **click link** on any Internet Explorer page, all of the links will be numbered so that you can verbally click them. As you can see from the following, you now have the same advantages in Google Chrome and Firefox. The following is what you will see when you say **click link** in the latest versions of Internet Explorer, Firefox or Google Chrome.



Google Chrome



Internet Explorer 11



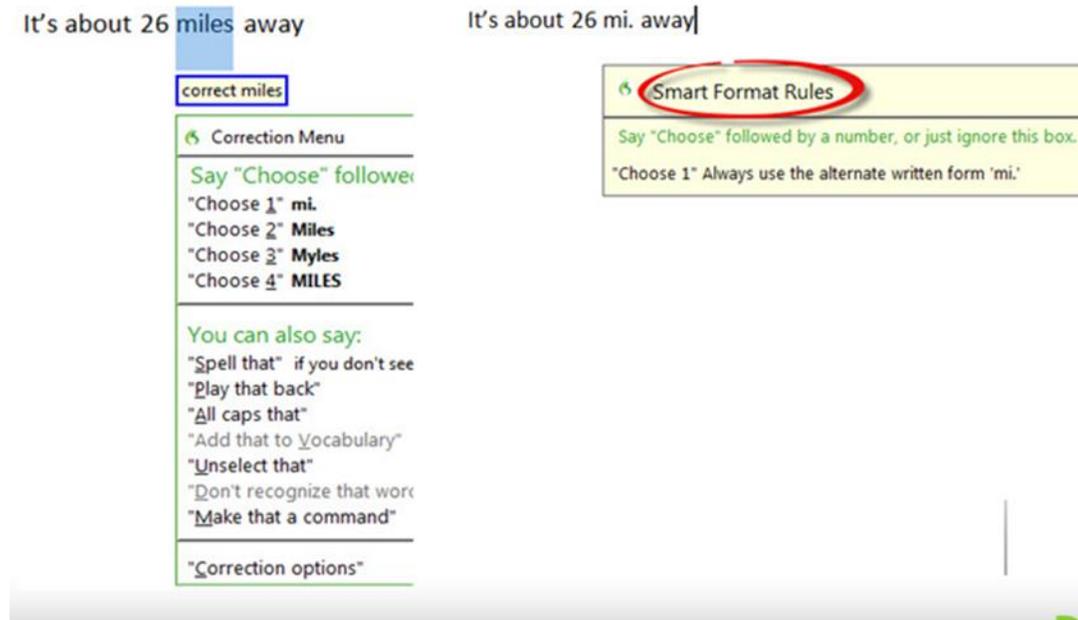
- Beginning with DNS Ver. 11, training a user profile was not always necessary (for end-users with a US mid-continental accent). DNS Ver. 12 improved on that technology, but DNS Ver. 13 kicks it up a notch by making **skipping general training** the default setting. With DNS Ver. 13, accuracy has increased to the point that training a user profile will likely be a waste of time.
- DNS Ver. 13 provides for improved, faster user profile enrollment.

• The new **Farfield Algorithms** will now allow end-users to use the built-in microphone on notebook or tablet computers. Of course, just because you can do it, doesn't mean that you should. We only recommend using your computer's integrated microphone and soundcard in situations where you have forgotten or lost your appropriate [USB microphone](#). What is truly phenomenal about the new Farfield Algorithms is that it not only potentially increases the accuracy of [TableMikes](#), but also doubles the distance of the microphone pick-up. When dictating with our SpeechWare [3-in-1](#) TableMike, we can now maintain high accuracy even when leaning back in our chair (approximately 40 inches). Unfortunately, we can't see our monitor from that distance[®] *You will find additional information on Farfield Algorithms in the KnowBRAINER Dragon 13 Installation/Training Guide (complementary to KnowBRAINER Dragon customers).*

• Nuance has improved their Smart Format Rules, by literally making them smarter. It detects your style of formatting and offers to tailor NaturallySpeaking's format options to suit your personal needs "on-the-fly".

Smart Format Rules

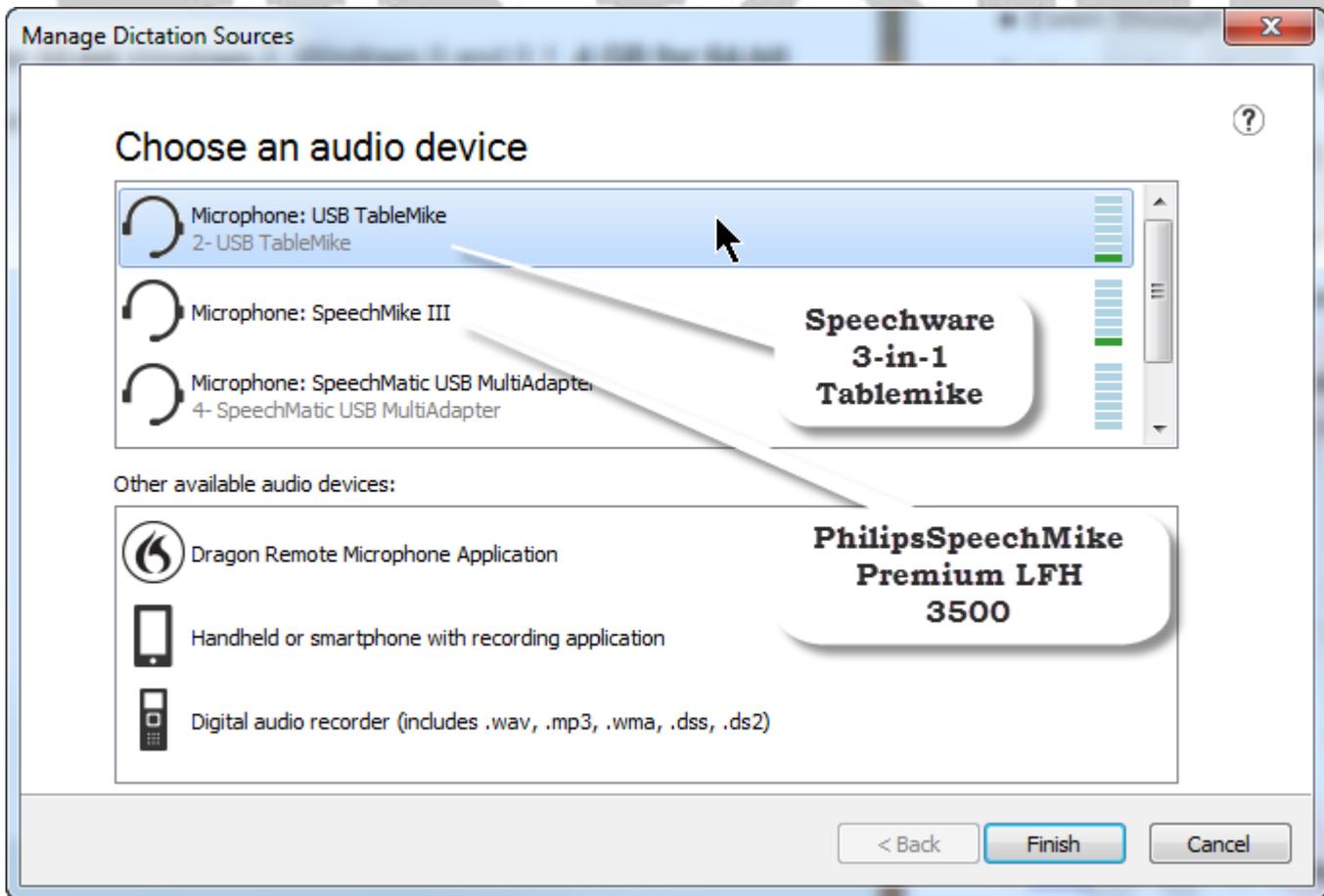
(Help appears the 1st time only)



- NaturallySpeaking Ver. 1 through Ver. 11 utilized the same robotic-sounding text-to-speech engine. DNS Ver. 12 introduced 2 significantly improved, more natural sounding, US and British female voices. DNS Ver. 13 takes it a step further, by introducing **2 new** variable speed **text-to-speech engines**; British Serena and American Samantha. They sound so good that it's a pleasure to use them to read back text or to add verbal acknowledgment to Advanced-Scripting commands (exclusive to the professional versions of NaturallySpeaking **and/or** the [KnowBRAINER 2014](#) command utility).
- DNS Ver. 13 introduces a new, automatically collapsing DragonBar view mode. This default setting is simply referred to as "New" in the Dragon View options. It's basically a miniature version of the default "Docked to Top" mode, automatically scrolling out of sight to allow you to view more of your desktop. The (horizontal and 45° angle) microphone icon has been replaced by a simpler one; green for on, red for off and blue or yellow (depending on your DragonBar view option) for sleeping.



- Even though DNS Ver. 13 is .8 Gb larger than DNS Ver. 12, it utilizes less system resources, runs **faster**, and performs better on computers with limited resources.
- DNS Ver. 13 features improved tutorials, improved training and improved help files.
- The DNS Ver. 13 **Vocabulary Editor** includes new enhancements, such as the ability to search for the Spoken Word form.
- Faster correction.
- Dragon now automatically detects the best audio device, when there is more than one choice; then asks you to manually select the best option.
- **Manage Dictation Sources** is a new feature which simplifies managing multiple sound sources, and accommodates end-users who work with more than one similar sound system. For example, previous versions of Dragon only permitted the use of one USB microphone. The new Manage Dictation Sources feature allows you to have as many sound systems as you like, keeping them organized so that you can quickly switch between them without having to rerun the Audio Check or switch user profiles. *Note the following, where it appears that 2 microphones are in use simultaneously; Dragon only permits the use of one microphone at a time but the new Manage Dictation Sources will display all sound sources, including active sound sources, by displaying the green bars.*



- The dynamic Dragon Sidebar has been improved in DNS Ver. 13, and renamed “Learning Center”.
- DNS Ver. 13 features improved interactive tutorials.
- Full support for WordPerfect X7 and OpenOffice Writer 4.1 has been added.
- Full support for Windows 8 (including Metro support) has been added.
- A Canadian English vocabulary has been added.
- Exclusive to the Professional versions of Dragon, only - More custom command flexibility has been added. One example of this would be the ability to create open ended commands that can search for any word or phrase in your personal vocabulary, as opposed to a word or phrase from a defined list of variables. We can now create open

ended commands to search for anything in a database, website etc. without having to predefine any variables. For example, you now have the ability to create an Advanced-Scripting command using any words in the Dragon vocabulary. For example: You can create a command called "Save As <dictation>" so that when you save something like "save as grocery list" (or anything else you wish to dictate) you can save your new document with a single command instead of the usual 3 commands. You can also create specialized search commands and email commands like **Gmail Bob Jones** or **Google antique cars**.

See [NaturallySpeaking 13 Comparison Matrix](#) for additional information on the differences between Dragon Pro, Premium and the Home Edition. **Note that we do not recommend using the Home Edition, due to its many limitations.**

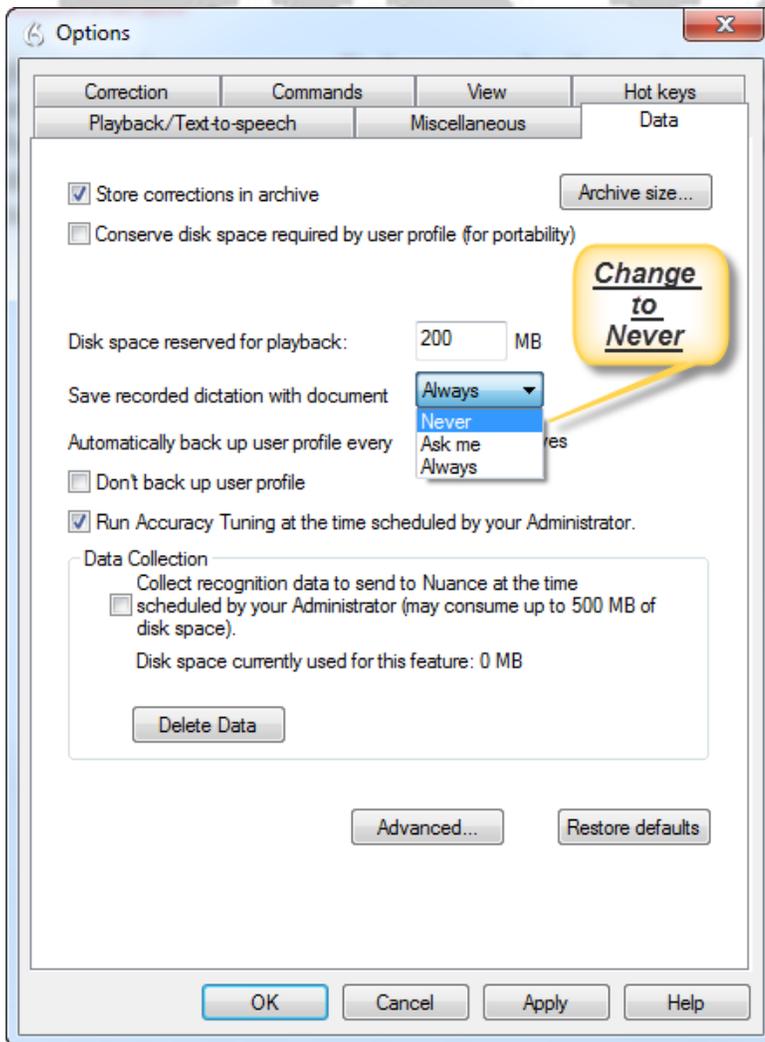
Cons:

- When attempting to dictate into a non-Full Text Control application, you may experience odd behavior such as the appearance of random letters or the deployment of an unintentional command. Unlike previous versions of NaturallySpeaking, Dragon 13 frequently disallows dictation into most non-speech recognition friendly applications without using the Dictation Box. This probably explains why Nuance, for the 1st time, decided to add a default checkmark to the Use Dictation Box for unsupported applications in the Dragon Miscellaneous options. We found this to be unquestionably the worst feature of Ver. 13. You may be prevented from dictating into numerous Windows, search boxes etc. For example, you can no longer dictate into the Dragon Add new word or phrase utility. This was not an issue in Ver. 12 but in our opinion, is something that will need to be patched with a service release.

- By default, Dragon still sets the Speed vs. Accuracy bar at the 50% position (unless your computer is underpowered). As a result, even the fastest computers will default to the 50% mark. In our tests, we've found that increasing the setting on the Speed vs. Accuracy bar (to the Most Accurate setting) *increased accuracy without impacting overall speed* (on qualified computers).
- Dragon automatically selects the best speech model, depending on your computer processor and amount of RAM. With 4 Gb of RAM, Dragon automatically chooses BestMatch V. *We only recommend BestMatch V for computers with 6 Gb (or more) of RAM.*
- Nuance has improved the Learn from Sent Email function, which previously only worked well with Outlook. This function now works with Gmail and Yahoo mail. *However, we recommend against using this feature. When you run this Learn from Sent Email utility, you run the risk of Dragon adding misspelled words to your vocabulary. In the case of emails that you are responding to, Dragon may also learn someone else's writing style.*
- When installing a Dragon upgrade, you will need access to your previous Dragon serial number in order to activate DNS Ver. 13. Locating your previous serial number may be a bit of a nuisance but considering the amount of theft on the Internet, it does not seem like an unreasonable inconvenience.
- Dragon 13 utilizes a new color scheme and changed the behavior of the microphone icon. Previous versions of the Dragon icon used to display the microphone icon laying down (horizontal) and red when the microphone was toggled off. When the microphone was in the Asleep state, it would be at a 45° angle and colored yellow. When the microphone was on, it would be vertical and colored green. This was a great concept but for reasons unknown, Nuance decided to forgo the previous winning formula. In Ver. 13, the microphone angle never changes and the new Asleep state is light blue, as opposed

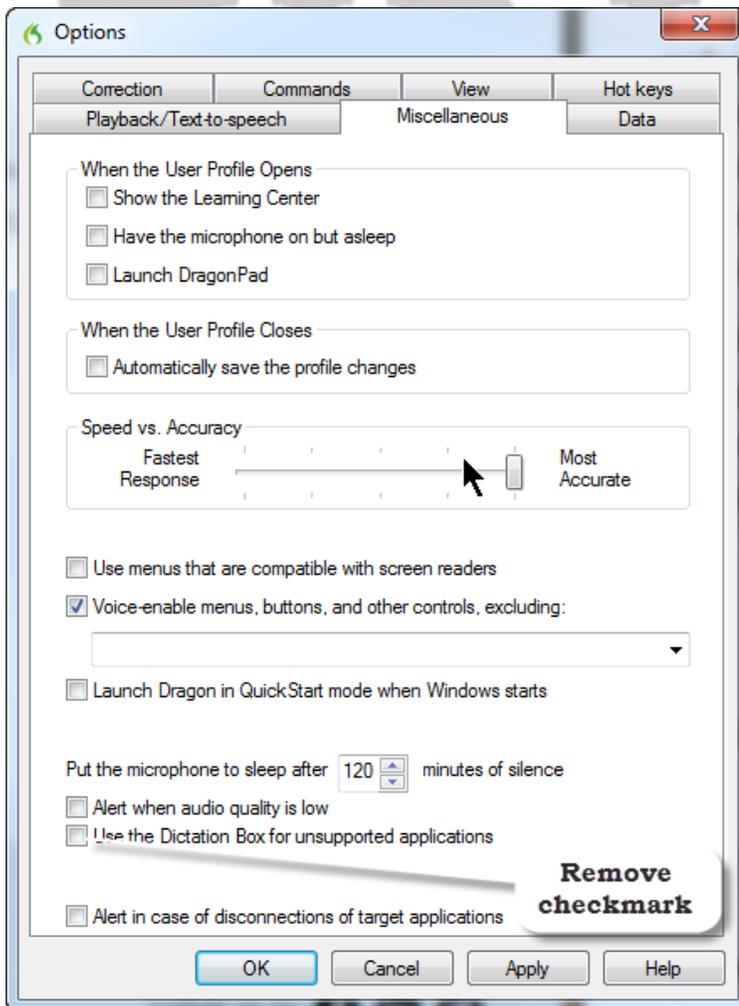
to yellow, which is a poor choice because it can be difficult to tell the difference between light blue and green especially if you are colorblind.

- Previous versions of the Professional editions of Dragon included the ability to save a recording of your dictation (embed) with your document for deferred use. Many end-users didn't appreciate getting nagged with an "Ask Me" prompt as to whether or not they wished to save a recording of the dictation with every Microsoft Word document. Unfortunately, it looks like Nuance dropped the ball here. Instead of making the default setting to "Never" prompt or save a recording of your dictation with your document (which likely more than 99% of the population would've preferred) Nuance changed the default setting to "Always" which automatically saves a recording of your dictation with your document without your knowledge or prompting. The problem with this approach is that if you dictate a lot of Microsoft Word documents, you could easily use up fill your hard drive in a relatively short period of time. Fortunately this is easily remedied by the end-user changing this setting in their Data options. For a detailed list of additional recommended Dragon changes, click on [KnowBrainer Tweaks](#)



- If you are easily offended by non-politically correct words like f*ck and sh*tfaced, along with dozens of other similar words, you're not going to be pleased that Nuance chose to add those words to the general large vocabulary. We suspect the educational community and religious community may have some issues with this decision.
- While new users will likely appreciate many new features, such as the Dictation Box springing up every time you dictate into a **non**-Full-Text-Control Window, more experienced users may prefer to toggle off some of these default settings.

The following includes our personal, miscellaneous preferences:



Nuance System Requirements:

4 Gb of RAM recommended (2 Gb Minimum) *At KnowBrainer, we recommend a minimum of 8 Gb of Ram and prefer 16 Gb.*

CPU: 2.2 GHz Intel® dual core or equivalent AMD processor. (Minimum 1 GHz Intel® Pentium® or equivalent AMD processor or 1.66 GHz Intel® Atom® processor). *At KnowBrainer, we recommend a 2.6 GHz Intel® quad core i5 or i7 CPU (Minimum 2.4 GHz dual core i5 processor).*

Processor Cache: 2 MB L2 cache. (Minimum: 512 KB L2 cache). *At KnowBrainer, we recommend 6 MB L2 cache.*

Free hard disk space: 4 GB

At KnowBrainer, we also recommend a [KnowBrainer Tested and Approved USB External Soundcard](#)

Supported Operating Systems:

- Microsoft Windows 7 32-bit and 64-bit
- Microsoft Windows 8 32-bit and 64-bit
- Windows Server 2008 R2, SP2 and R2 64-bit
- Windows Server 2012 R2, SP2 Standard Edition 64-bit

Note: An Internet connection is required for automatic product activation (a quick, anonymous process).

*This edition of Dragon does not support dictation directly into Electronic Medical Record (EMR) Systems. For EMR support, please use [Dragon Medical Practice Edition 2](#).

General Recommendations:

- WSR (Windows speech recognition) is faster than Dragon 13 but it can't compete with Dragon's features, flexibility, Vocabulary Builder, Vocabulary Editor, transcription capabilities, and most importantly, DNS Ver. 13's **accuracy**. Anyone who is serious about speech recognition should consider using Dragon 13, because comparing WSR to Dragon 13 would be equivalent to comparing WordPad to Microsoft Word.
- Dragon 13 will not run on Windows XP/Vista. Considering that Microsoft has removed their support for Windows XP, we recommend upgrading to Windows 7 or higher.

*Note: Our customers will also be receiving a complimentary copy of our **KnowBrainer Training Guide**. This includes step-by-step, pictorial installation instructions as well as NaturallySpeaking basic, intermediate and advanced training.*

- Nuance has increased the accuracy in DNS Ver. 13, but we recommend against using integrated soundcards and/or the manufacturer's OEM microphone. We consider OEM microphones and integrated soundcards to be more of a starter/backup sound system. If speech recognition is going to play an important role in your workflow, consider a professional [KnowBrainer Tested and Approved Microphone](#) and if needed, a [KnowBrainer Tested and Approved USB External Soundcard](#)

Purchasing Note: *Having read this review, if you are as excited about Dragon NaturallySpeaking Ver. 13 as we are, you may feel ready to start shopping. We recommend purchasing Dragon NaturallySpeaking and speech recognition peripherals (microphones, digital recorders, etc.) only from a Nuance certified/licensed VAR (value added reseller). When you purchase all of your speech recognition tools from a single Nuance certified source, you're typically dealing with an expert whose combined knowledge of Dragon NaturallySpeaking, microphones, soundcards, digital recorders, etc. is unparalleled. Purchasing from multiple sources often means ending up with items that either aren't optimally compatible or aren't knowledgably supported. When you purchase from a Nuance certified reseller, you not only maintain your right to manufacturer support but additionally obtain an extra layer of technical support from a qualified DNS reseller/trainer. This often includes various other amenities, ranging from step-by-step installation guides (**all but a requirement for Ver. 13**) to virtual on-site assistance. It is simply in your best interest to support your Nuance certified reseller.*

[4 Reasons for Purchasing from KnowBrainer Inc:](#)

1. When you purchase Dragon products directly from Nuance, over-the-counter or through a box pushing website (that sells 1000 other software products) your only technical support is the manufacturer's support. This is centered in Puerto Rico and manned by paid support people, most of whom don't use Dragon NaturallySpeaking. Their answers are obtained from the Nuance knowledge base, rather than from first-hand experience and actual familiarity with and knowledge of DNS products. When you purchase NaturallySpeaking from KnowBRAINER, you still have full access to Nuance technical support. In addition, you will also get an extra layer of highly qualified technical support from KnowBRAINER's recognized experts in the field of speech recognition, who actually use Dragon products every day. When you purchase from KnowBRAINER, you additionally receive virtual on-site, telephone and email support. KnowBRAINER includes **FREE** limited lifetime support for Dragon Professional, Medical, Legal, all microphones and all digital recorders.

2. No matter who you purchase your Dragon from, you will have access to 24 hour forum support from the KnowBRAINER Speech Recognition Forums (the world's largest speech recognition forum) but when you purchase from KnowBRAINER, part of the profits from your purchase will go to support and maintain the KnowBRAINER speech recognition forums for everybody.

3. A portion of KnowBRAINER profits also go into the development of KnowBRAINER 2014, a third-party command utility featuring thousands of built-in commands that include far more capabilities than Dragon Professional and deploy significantly faster than Dragon commands. Most importantly, you help us to continue to develop and provide KnowBRAINER 2014, **FREE** of charge to anyone with a physical disability. This is the reason we went into this business. It is the reason we stay in this business. There are those few for whom KnowBRAINER 2014 (and previous versions) has been a life changer. It is for them that we exist..

4. When you purchase Dragon software from KnowBRAINER, you also receive a complimentary copy of our exclusive KnowBRAINER installation/training manual. This includes pictorial installation instructions (including how to install a smart upgrade as a full copy) along with beginner, intermediate and advanced training.

When you purchase microphones, digital recorders or Dragon products from KnowBRAINER, you also receive a KnowBRAINER custom hardcopy user guide created especially for that product.

Previous Reviews:

If you would like to see some of our previous reviews check out the following:

[KnowBrainer TableMike Face-Off](#)

[KnowBrainer Handheld Microphone Face-Off](#)

[KnowBrainer Headset Microphone Face-Off](#)

[KnowBrainer Telephone Microphone Face-Off](#)

[KnowBrainer Digital Recorder Face-Off](#)

[KnowBrainer Wireless Microphone Face-Off](#)

[KnowBrainer USB Soundcard Face-Off](#)

Current Gold Standards:

The following is a list of speech recognition add-ons that we consider to be #1 in their microphone categories we:

Best Wireless Microphone = [Samson Airline 77](#)

Best Combo Telephone Wireless Microphone = [Sennheiser SD Pro1](#)

Best Handheld USB Microphone = Philips [SpeechMike Premium](#) USB Handheld/TableMike

Best USB TableMike = [SpeechWare 3-in-1](#) / [SpeechWare 6-in-1](#) / [SpeechWare 9-in-1](#)

Best Mobile USB TableMike = SpeechWare [TravelMike](#)

Best Wired Headset Microphone = SpeechWare [FlexyMike DEC](#)

Best Bluetooth Microphone = [VXi VoxStar UC](#)

Best Digital Recorder = Philips [DPM-8000](#)

Best speech recognition application = [Dragon NaturallySpeaking](#)

Best Third-Party Command Utility = [KnowBrainer 2014](#)

[Lunis Orcutt](#) - Developer of [KnowBrainer 2014](#) and founder of [KnowBrainer Speech Recognition Forums](#) (the world's largest speech recognition forum)

[Chat Live](#) w/a Nuance Gold Certified Speech Recognition Solutions Provider



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